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SUBJECT: GERMANY AND THE EU ON IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

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Classified By: Political M/C George Glass for reasons 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) German MFA Iran Task Force Director Krueger told poloff January 21 that during the mid-January EU PSC meeting Germany proposed a motion calling on all EU capitals to demarche Iranian Ambassadors in EU capitals on Iran's Human Rights violations. Krueger said the Greeks were the first to comply with a January 20 demarche and that the Germans planned a similar demarche for January 21. He said the agenda would cover the whole range of human rights violations including violence against protestors, limits to freedom of assembly, expression, religion; jailing of political opposition; the Bah'ai trial; and outstanding EU cases. Poloff asked that they also raise the cases of the outstanding American prisoners. State Secretary Dr. Wolf-Ruthart Born would deliver the message to Iranian Ambassador in Berlin - Ali Reza Sheikh Attar. (Note: Born, a veteran German diplomat of the "old-school", has a grand-fatherly and authoritative way and has no reservations about "compelling" others. He was effective the last time he demarshaled Attar concerning the case of Iranian born (German resident) artist and political-activist, Parastou Forouhar, who was denied permission to leave Iran in December 2009 for approximately 3 weeks (see septel). End Note.)

¶2. (C) Krueger said that Germany was currently looking at how/when to best bring the Iranian issue to the forefront at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. He said the Iran Universal Periodic Review, currently scheduled for February 15 would be one such possibility (reftel). Kreuger said it would be important to find venues to make clear to Iran that the concern for Iran's human rights violations is not limited to the EU or the West, but comes from the global community.

Importance of Not Linking Human Rights and Nuclear Issues

¶3. (C) Krueger said the German government make a point to raise Human Rights issues in every meeting with Iranian officials, in Berlin and in Tehran, and agreed that the issue must be pressed at every opportunity. However, Krueger explained that the German government believes strongly in the importance of not linking the nuclear and human rights issues for two reasons: First, the forum for achieving success in each issue is different; Second, by keeping the issues separate it is easier to avoid any temptation of "sacrificing" human rights to progress in the nuclear dossier as many Iranian human rights activists fear. He noted that the German government was also receiving concerned interventions by members of the huQn rights community who fear that continued dialogue with the current Iranian government on the nuclear issue could yield a "Libya" result - with success on the nuclear front being accompanied by a blind-eye from the West on the continued Iranian human rights violations. By keeping them separate, he argued, it is possible to send a clearer message of pursuing a policy of "Both, And" vice "Either/Or."

¶4. (U) Post notes the German government has made at least 14 public statements condemning Iranian human rights violations since the June 12, 2009 elections. Qs early as June 14, then FM Steinmeier called the violent actions of law enforcement against peaceful demonstrators "unacceptable". Chancellor Merkel herself said "Germany stands with the Iranian people, who wish to express their rights to freedom of assembly and expression" and she went on to call on the Iranian government to "allow peaceful demonstrations, free political prisoners, refrain from use for violence against demonstrators, allow free movement of journalists, and called for a recount of the Presidential ballots" in a June 21 statement. More recently, after the Ashura-related violence both FM Westerwelle and Chancellor Merkel reiterated their criticism of the Iranian government. In a December 28, 2009 statement Merkel "condemned" the recent violence in Iran and the actions of the Iranian security forces which led to the deaths of Iranian citizens. She also called on the Iranian government to avoid further escalation and seek a peaceful solution through political dialogue. Westerwelle echoed Merkel's comments in his December 28 statement, in which he reminded the Iranian government that the international community was watching and called on the government to live up to its international obligations to protect the civil and political rights of its citizens.

DELAWIE